

East Herts Council Report

Executive

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 2 June 2026

Report by: Councillor Mione Goldspink, Executive Member for Communities

Report title: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-2031

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – This report presents the draft version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-31 and recommends it to Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:

- a) **To consider the content of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2026-31 and raise any further points for consideration for inclusion.**
- b) **That unless substantive changes are required as a result of consultation in which case a revised version will be brought to the Executive for consideration, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 be endorsed for recommendation to Council for approval.**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all local authorities are required to carry out a homelessness review and to develop and publish a strategy based on the review every five years.
- 1.2 East Herts published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003. This is the fifth Strategy and is due to run from 2026 to March 2031.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 placed enhanced duties on local authorities to assist homeless and potentially homeless people. One of the key aims of the Act was to ensure that housing authorities take a comprehensive and strategic approach to managing and preventing homelessness in their districts.

- 2.2 The council's last Homelessness Strategy was adopted and published in 2019 and the council and its partners have made significant progress on providing and improving services to those people that are homeless or potentially homeless. The Strategy includes a section on the achievements by the council and its partners to improve the homeless services provided, since the last Strategy was adopted.
- 2.3 The previous Strategy covered the period 2019-2024. Delivery of review of the strategy was delayed as the post responsible for this work was not in place until September 2025.
- 2.4 Much has changed both locally and nationally since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. The most significant recent changes include the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and A National Plan to end Homelessness published in December 2025. The latter includes an outcomes framework for local authorities and the requirement for areas to have local targets to move from a crisis response to one focused on prevention.
- 2.5 A draft Strategy has been developed. This has 5 objectives around which the Housing Service will build its Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan will shape the emphasis of the Housing Options Team's work for the next five years.
- 2.6 The strategic priorities in the strategy are:
- Continue to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity
 - Increase temporary accommodation options to improve suitability and sustainability, reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
 - Continue to improve the pathways in and out of supported housing and the support available to vulnerable single people
 - Maximise the availability of affordable housing
 - Continue to provide support to reduce rough sleeping and where this occurs, ensure it is brief and not re-occurring
- 2.7 The draft Strategy was published for consultation. Customers of the homeless service were specifically asked to contribute as they had insight into any gaps in service provision they experienced and what could have been done which may have prevented their homelessness.

- 2.8 All the responses to the consultation were considered.
- 2.9 A copy of the updated Strategy is attached at Appendix A. An Equalities Impact assessment has also been prepared for the Strategy and included at Appendix B.
- 2.10 Executive Members are now asked if there any further points they wish to raise or be considered for inclusion in the draft Strategy, particularly regarding the actions outlined under each of the four Strategy Objectives, which will form the basis of the first year's Delivery Plan.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 Executive are asked to consider the draft strategy and subject to any points raised, recommend this to Council.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Accept the recommendations- RECOMMENDED for the reasons outlined above.
- 4.2 Not to accept the recommendations- NOT RECOMMENDED. As explained in 5.1 there is currently no strategy which is a statutory requirement

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 The council currently does not have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which is a statutory requirement and necessary to provide the strategic direction of the service. Recommending the Strategy to Council would mitigate this risk.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 Community Safety
a) Yes – preventing and relieving homelessness, positively contributes to community safety.
- 6.2 Data Protection
a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.3 Equalities
a) Yes – the purpose of the strategy is to prevent and relieve

homelessness, which has implications in terms of equalities. An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and is shown at Appendix B.

- 6.4 Environmental Sustainability
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.5 Financial
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.6 Health and Safety
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.7 Human Resources
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.8 Human Rights
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.9 Legal
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 6.10 Specific Wards
 - a) None arising directly from this report.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 Background Information: None
- 7.2 Appendices
 - a) draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
 - b) equalities impact assessment

Contact Member

Councillor Mione Goldspink, Executive Member for Communities

Mione.goldspink@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Jonathan Geall, Director for Communities

Contact Tel. No. 01992 531594

jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Katherine Gilcreest, Housing Lead

Contact Tel. No. 01279502068

katherine.gilcreest@eastherts.gov.uk